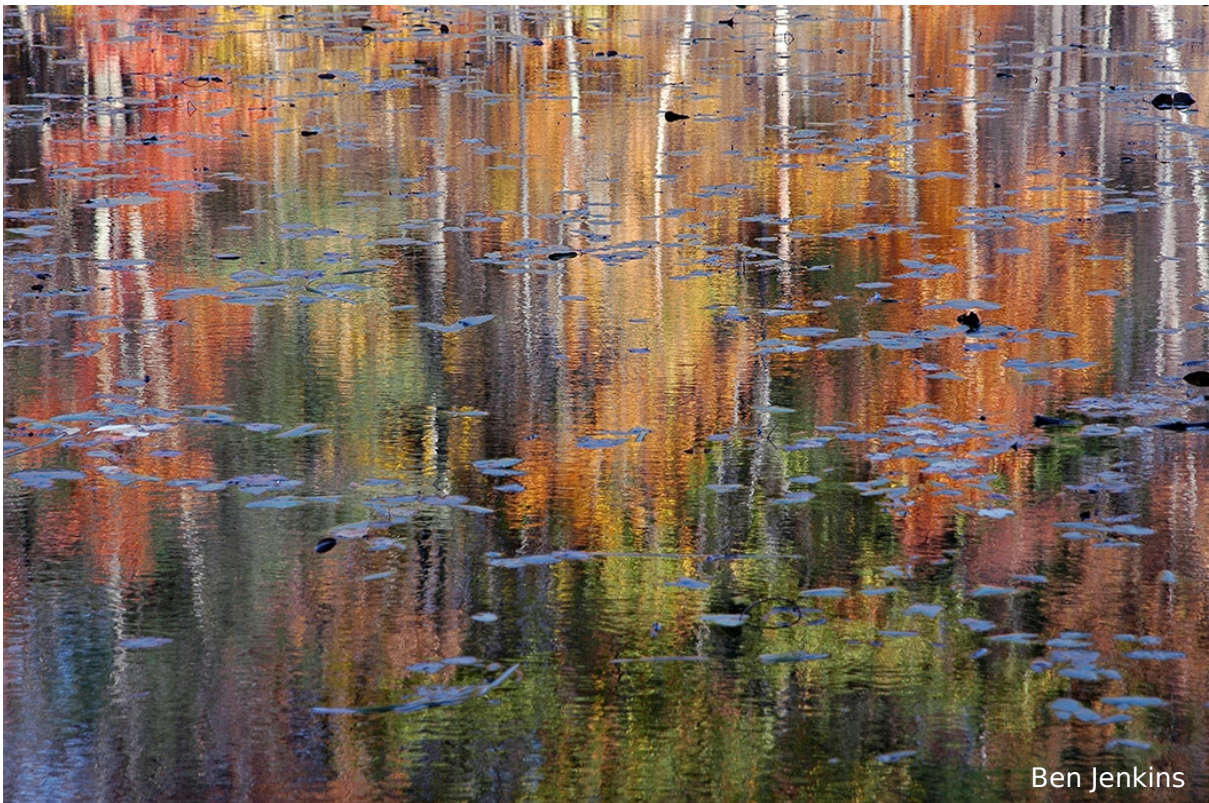




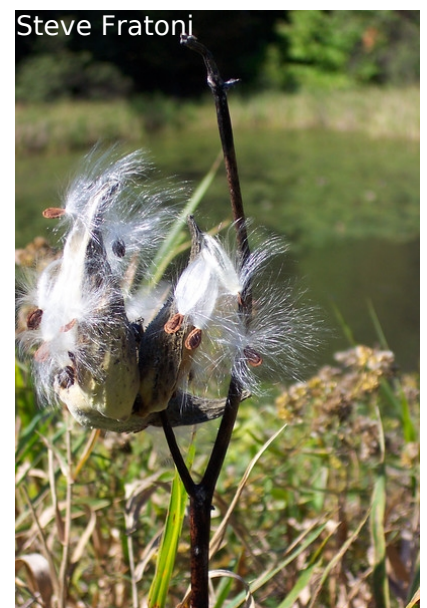
Broad Brook Coalition Celebrates 20 Years!



A Modest Beginning

The origin of Broad Brook Coalition was very modest. Simple things came together as events unfolded. This is how the story started for me.

The area containing Fitzgerald Lake was acquired by the city in 1977. A dam had been built by the Fitzgerald's to create the lake which was the focus of a potential housing development. The city purchased the 155 acres including the Lake after the development was not pursued. At that time I had distributed a letter to North Farms Road residents, urging them to lobby the City Council to acquire the lake. There was no neighborhood group then to organize for the preservation of that natural area. (Unfortunately, the city declined to purchase the land some years earlier when it had right of first refusal. It would have been much cheaper to acquire the land at that point.)



A Modest Beginning (continued)

In the 1980's I had participated in the state-wide effort to amend the Massachusetts constitution to allow different types of property to be taxed at different rates. That effort was a citizens' petition process that took several years, and ended with a state-wide ballot question, which was approved by the voters. In that campaign, I met Jonathan Roche, who was then a student at University of Massachusetts, Amherst where I work. I had known Jonathan's father, who also worked at U Mass and who lived off North Elm Street in Northampton.

In the late 1980's several people who lived at Laurel Park including Jonathan Roche were concerned over plans to create a fairly large development just west of Coles Meadow Road called Hidden Oaks Estates. This group decided to organize to preserve the land being considered for development. Jonathan called me and wondered if I would be interested in attending a meeting since I lived on North Farms Road on the west side of the area that would be developed. I said I would, and so I attended their meetings. Broad Brook Coalition was born. Eventually, I served two periods as president.

The development was planned by Christianson and Lococo, business people from Florence. We met with them to talk about our views--that the area they planned to develop should remain natural. That did not persuade them.

We organized BBC as a neighborhood group, defining the neighborhood as the area between North King Street, Hatfield Street, Bridge Road, and west to Route 9. We started raising money, and retained Peter Westover, an environmental expert and conservation officer for the town of Amherst, to reevaluate the parcel for wetlands. The developers had flagged areas they thought were wetlands, but we suspected their criteria were looser than the law required. We did find more extensive wetlands.

When the local developers notified the city of their plans, the Fire Department also had objections. Because the access road was long, there was concern that with only one outlet (the access road would be a dead-end off Coles Meadow Road) it violated regulations for fire equipment access. The City also was concerned about a costly sewage pumping station needed to develop the site because of extensive rock ledge.

After several years of not getting permits from the city, and with the real estate market in decline, Christianson and Lococo sold the development to an insurance company from Hartford. At that point, BBC felt that the "deep pockets" (large financial resources) of an insurance company might be enough to push the development along. However, the insurance company later decided not to pursue the project. That lack of energy and money by the insurance company provided an opening to the city to acquire the area originally planned for the development of Hidden Oaks Estates. With BBC lobbying, the city acquired what is called the "Cooke's Pasture" section in 1994, after six years of contention.

Many of those who opposed protecting Cooke's Pasture used the argument that the city needed more taxable property to flourish. In the 1980's, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau did a study which showed that suburban development generally cost cities and towns more in services than they would gain in tax revenue. That analysis made preservation advocacy a little easier.

Over the years, BBC persisted with efforts to add to the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Many of the additions occurred in unexpected ways. For example, BBC used to meet at the Laurel Park offices, and one night a woman showed up and spoke to me. She was a nurse and had worked with my father at the V.A. Medical Center. She had read my name in the newspaper as being active in BBC. She and her sister wanted to deal with an inheritance of some land from their father, but wanted to make some money from it too. After negotiations, the city agreed to acquire the parcel--after the owners had logged it. This is what is known as the Cimek section (38 acres acquired in 1993).

The lesson from our history is that ordinary people working together for a common goal can bring about remarkable results—helping to preserve the natural world for future generations.

Champion of the Homeless

Broad Brook Coalition sends its congratulations to BBC member Yvonne Freccero, a recipient of the 2008 Paragon Award for Lifetime Achievement. Yvonne, a former Board member of Broad Brook Coalition and advocate for affordable housing, has been the driving force behind Northampton's Interfaith Shelter. We salute Yvonne for making our community a better place to live!

Notes from the Management Committee

As in past years, the removal of invasive plant species from the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area continues to be one of the Management Committee's major concerns. The main project for 2007 was the removal of water chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake, which was carried out on two warm, sunny, summer days from an impressive flotilla of canoes and kayaks. A major infestation at the eastern end of the lake, which had been the subject of a large control effort in 2006, showed signs of significant improvement, and another large infestation toward the western end of the lake was discovered and removed. All told, the 2007 water-chestnut eradication project involved 21 individuals in 12 boats who spent an aggregate of 110 hours on the lake! If you would like to help wipe out water chestnut in Fitzgerald Lake, please join us this summer on July 19 and August 9 (see **Spring and Summer Work Days** in this issue).

Last year also saw the establishment of another "shrub island" in Cooke's Pasture, a continuation of water quality assessment, and further measures to thwart our resident beavers in their unending efforts to clog the dam outflow. In early May, 12 volunteers participated in the planting of a third shrub island in Cooke's Pasture in an ongoing effort to improve the food and habitat resources for shrubland wildlife. Rather than planting another shrub island this year, we have decided to devote the work day on May 3 to maintenance of the existing shrub islands and we would be pleased to have your help (see **Spring and Summer Work Days** in this issue).

Water samples from the Broad Brook, Fitzgerald Lake and the marsh below the dam were tested quarterly for pH, alkalinity and the concentrations of dissolved oxygen, nitrates and phosphates. While the values for most of these parameters were normal, the amount of nitrates in the water entering the lake was found to be well above that considered favorable for fish and other aquatic life. We hope to track down the source of the excess nitrates this summer (see Nitrate Pollution).

Finally, a sharp rise in the level of Fitzgerald Lake in late May indicated that the beavers were at it again. Sure enough, they had very effectively barricaded the dam outflow with mud and grass. Mike Callahan, of Beaver Solutions, quickly met the challenge by installing a "leveler pipe" on the lake bottom that connects directly into the drain. The new device seems to have outwitted the beavers....at least for the time being.

In prospect for the current year are ongoing efforts to combat the proliferation of invasive plant species such as water chestnut in the lake, exotic buckthorn and spotted knapweed in Cooke's Pasture, and phragmites and purple loosestrife in the marsh. To help us plan and finance some of this work, we are in the process of preparing an application for a grant from the USDA's Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) in collaboration with the Hadley office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Management Committee will also continue to organize routine water quality assessment, maintenance of the bird and bat houses and mowing of the pastures and dam, as necessary. This year we also hope to begin a systematic survey of trees and shrubs in the various forested portions of the FLCA under the guidance of BBC member Bob Leverett.

Bob Zimmermann

HAVE YOU SEEN....

- bats using bat houses in Cooke's Pasture?
- other bat sightings?
- kestrels?
- signs of breeding birds?
- bluebirds in the nest boxes?

Please contact Bruce Hart: bhart2000@aol.com, 584-4176





Alex and Parker Clean Up FLCA

Last October, on a warm and sunny autumn day, Parker Ziegler and Alex Sullivan, both eighth-grade students at JFK Middle School, collected about forty pounds of trash from the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. They started in the lakeside areas near Fishing Place and then moved on to other trails, eventually working for more than two hours each and hauling out several large bags of trash.

JFK eighth-graders are required to perform a community service project and when the boys were thinking through their options, Christine White-Ziegler, Parker's mother, suggested a trash pick-up at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Parker called Broad Brook Coalition to explain the plan and received swift permission and encouragement for the project.

Broad Brook Coalition welcomes this type of support and can always suggest projects to eager volunteers.

Robert Bissell

Thank You to Our Generous Members!

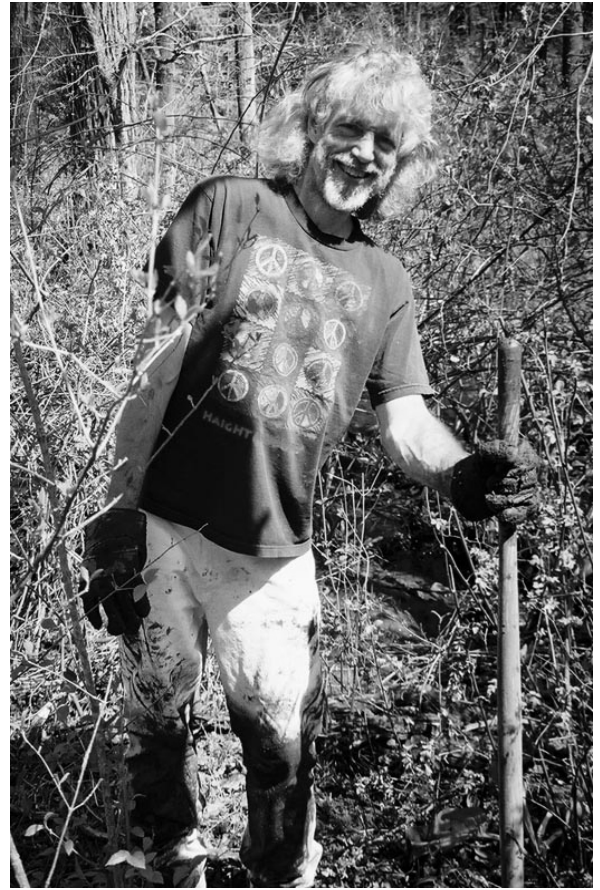
Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area started out with a parcel of 155 acres preserved by the City of Northampton. Because of your commitment – and the commitment of past members – the conservation area now covers 632 acres of beautiful trails and wildlife habitat. The BBC Board would like to extend our grateful thanks to those who have contributed to the Land Acquisition Fund this year.

Ralph and Esther Bailey
 Tamara Barbasch and Brian Moriarty
 Thomas Bassett and Beverly Shaw
 Mary Ellen Birkett and Peter Searl
 Janet and Robert Bissell
 Mrs. Robert Boucher
 Michael Brezsynek and Katherine Allen
 Mary Kenley Clark
 Philip A. Costello
 Helen and Donald Dupes
 Harley Erdman and Sarita Hudson
 Nancy Felton and Joel Danský
 Emory and Susan Ford
 Tom Gagnon and Bruce Callahan
 Alex Ghiselin and Diane Welter
 Norbert Goldfield
 Kathy Goos & Barry Worth
 Al & Sally Griggs
 Stephen M. Harding
 Rick Hart
 Wil and Joan Hastings
 Virginia Hayssen
 Dave Hopkins
 Hanna W. Hopp
 Mark Horowitz and Julia Moss
 James Humphreys
 Frandy Johnson and Lucy Hartry

Michael Kesten
 Peter and Shauneen Kocot
 Marisa Labozzetta and Martin Wohl
 James Lauila and Lin Lee
 John and Norma Locke
 Alan and Claudette Marvelli
 Patricia A. McDonagh
 Audrey Moriarty
 David Narkewicz and Yelena Mikich
 Lou Peugh and Edward Olmstead
 Stan Pollack and Joanna Varadi
 Ann and Peter Pufall
 Daniel L. and Kate Richardson
 Stanley and Eleanor Rothman
 Sharon and Ned Rudnitzsky
 Joel Russell and Mari Gottdeiner
 Robert Schrader and Caren Weiner
 Jonathan and Cheryl Schwab
 Ted and Elinor Selkirk
 Steven Stander
 Mary Jo Stanley
 Gerrit T. Stover
 Frances C. Volkmann and Joan Cenedella
 Nancy L. Weiss
 E. J. Welch, Jr.
 Athleen and Robert Zimmermann

Brian Adams, BBC Outstanding Volunteer 2007

The BBC Outstanding Volunteer Award for 2007 was bestowed upon Brian Adams, environmentalist, outdoorsman and longtime contributor to the Broad Brook Coalition. Brian served on the BBC Board of Directors from 1999 to 2005, much of that time as its Secretary. Brian was also chair of the BBC Management Committee for many years, in which capacity many of you knew him to be an implacable foe of invasive plants, leading the charge to eliminate them from the FLCA on numerous spring and fall work days. To all of these activities, Brian brought his trademark sense of humor, at once unconventional and delightful. We also note that Brian's environmental activism goes far beyond Fitzgerald Lake. To mention just a few of his achievements, he has served on the Sanctuary Committee at Arcadia, supervises the census of migratory fish in the Connecticut River at the Holyoke Dam, and advocates widely for measures to fight climate change. As a member of the faculty at Greenfield Community College, his courses in ecology have inspired many students to work for environmental causes and he has encouraged a number of them to join us in projects at the FLCA. He is also leading a program at GCC that focuses on ways to combat global warming at the local and community levels. The 2007 Outstanding Volunteer Award thus recognizes Brian's tireless work on behalf of the FLCA and the environment.



Spring and Summer Work Days at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area

Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants

Saturday, May 3 at 9 a.m.

As many of you know, we have created a number of “shrub islands” in Cooke’s Pasture. Over the past few years, we have planted three clusters of native shrubs, including bayberry, winterberry, spicebush, viburnum, dogwood, serviceberry, elderberry, and chokeberry. These native plant species provide birds and other wildlife with food and shelter and produce colorful flowers and berries as well. This year, we have decided not to plant another shrub island, but to devote a morning in early May to the maintenance of the islands established in past years. In particular, we will prune the new shrubs, cut back some of the competing undergrowth and replace plants that have not survived the winter. Some tools will be provided, but please bring along clippers and shears. Please join us at the former Moose Lodge parking lot at 8:45 a.m. or at the Fitzgerald Lake dam at 9:00 a.m. We should be finished by noon. For further information, call Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Removal of Exotic Buckthorn from Cooke’s Pasture

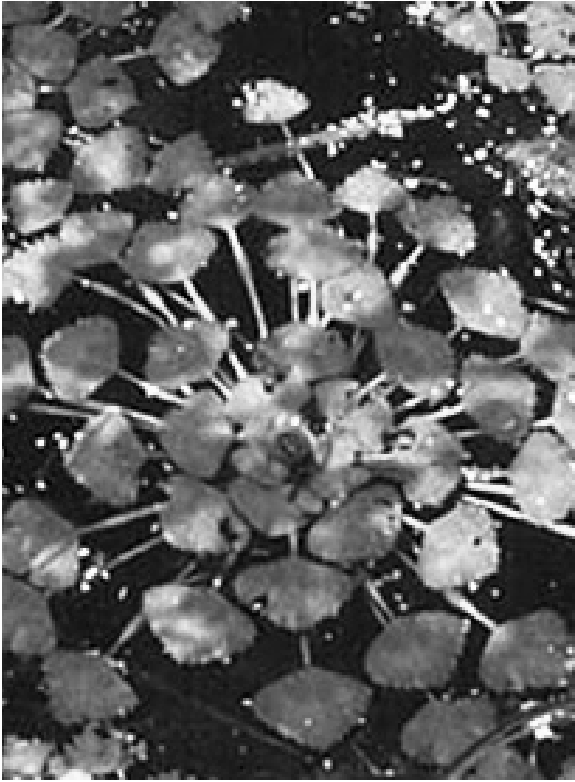
Saturday, June 14 at 9 a.m.

Last fall, we discovered a significant patch of invasive buckthorn in Cooke’s Pasture. Common and glossy buckthorn, both natives of Europe, were introduced into the U.S. over a hundred years ago for use in hedges and ornamental plantings. They have since invaded natural areas--both fields and wetlands--where they are aggressive competitors with native plants. In addition to degrading wildlife habitat, exotic buckthorns also bear spines and produce toxic substances. Although limited in size, the buckthorn patch in Cooke’s Pasture could readily expand owing to vigorous growth and the lack of insect or other natural controls. Smaller plants will be removed by hand. For larger plants, we intend to test the effectiveness of a mechanical weed-puller, called a “Weed Wrench”. Volunteers will meet at the former Moose Lodge parking lot at 8:45 a.m. or at the Fitzgerald Lake dam at 9:00 a.m. We anticipate that this project will take 2-3 hours. For further information, call Bob Zimmermann at 585-0405.

Spring and Summer Work Days (continued)

Removal of Water Chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake

Saturdays, July 19 at 9 a.m. & August 9 at 1 p.m.



The removal of water chestnut from Fitzgerald Lake has been a major priority of the BBC over the past two years as this invasive species has the potential to cover the entire lake. A large infestation of water chestnut at the eastern end of the lake was removed by hand in 2006. This area showed notable improvement in 2007, but a considerable effort was still required to uproot the remaining plants. A previously unrecognized patch of water chestnut toward the lake's western end was also found and removed last summer. This summer, we will follow up on both areas with the expectation that, with diligence, we can eventually eradicate the water-chestnut plague. As this activity takes place on the lake, we will need canoes and kayaks to get us where we need to go, as well as large plastic buckets to collect the plants. Wear long pants and sneakers (no sandals) and bring water, sunscreen and gloves. PFDs (personal flotation devices) are required. If you can contribute a boat, let us know. Please join us for a leisurely summer outing on Fitzgerald Lake! Meet at the North Farms Road parking lot on Saturday, July 19, at 9 a.m. and Saturday, August 9 at 1 p.m. We plan to spend about 3 hours on the lake both days. For further information, call Bruce Hart at 584-4176.

BBC Profile: Bob Rundquist

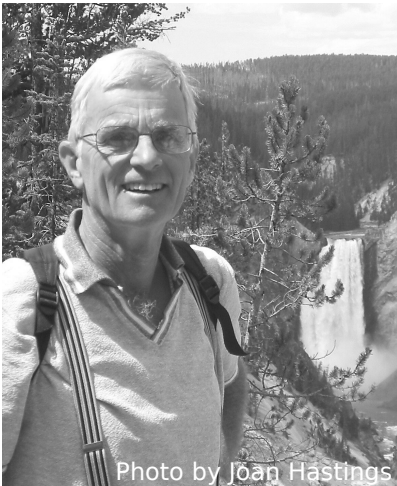


Photo by Joan Hastings

What happens when an avid fisherman, who is also an experienced engineer, moves to the Northampton area and discovers Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area? After enjoying some good fishing there in the mid-1980's, it did not take Bob Rundquist long to join the Broad Brook Coalition and to begin working on its trails under the guidance of Carmen Ahearn. They called themselves the "Rock Group." He joined others building sustainable paths through bogs, strategically placing rocks and board walks. Occasionally they practiced "turnpiking," which involves digging two trenches and piling soil to the middle to avoid needing extra fill and allowing water to run in the gullies on each side of the trail.

"I like hands-on projects outdoors," says Bob. "I like people but avoid meetings like the plague; I have an aversion to bureaucracy. BBC was perfect for me." He described during this interview an example of his enjoyment of

his work, seeing what obvious pleasure a Girl Scout troop experienced while visiting Fitzgerald Lake.

An independent man who started his own engineering company in the Valley, Bob took leadership of the trails committee and worked to improve the beautiful nature preserve around Fitzgerald Lake. He worked on the canoe launch project and appreciated the chance to work with twenty people toward the same goal. The launch makes the lake much more accessible for fishing and paddling.

A few years later, walking along watching birds at the marsh, Bob realized they would be much better seen from higher off the ground, above the line of high grasses. He carried a ladder out to a good viewpoint over the marsh and invited birders to look from the top. Gradually he convinced a team of people to design and build a bird blind on the spot. It took time to get the right permits, fundraise the necessary money and actually build the structure. A team of young people from Americorps with the direction of builder Ed Olander completed the project in 2000 and the rest of us have enjoyed it ever since.

BBC Profile: Bob Rundquist (continued)

After noticing that the level of the Lake rose two feet one year due to the work of several beaver families, the trail group investigated putting wire around the dam to let the water flow through. Such protection, as well as “beaver deceivers”, has resulted in beavers, trees on the lake’s edge and people happily co-existing. Over the years, Bob has worked on trail clearing and maintenance as well as the removal of invasive species, tasks that require new volunteers every year. Bob is also wondering about the benefits of a new spot on the Lake designed for shore fisherpeople.

Bob is now retired. He lives with his wife Marcie in Northampton and enjoys nature as often as possible. What luck to have a creative, energetic fisherman/engineer in our midst. Our ongoing thanks go out to Bob Rundquist.

Joan Hastings

Walks and Talks - Spring and Summer 2008



Wildlife biologist David McLain leads a fall foliage Walk and Talk in October 2007

Vernal Pools - Refuge for Wildlife

Heather Ruel, US Fish and Wildlife Service

10 a.m. at Forbes Library – Community Room

11:30 a.m. at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, North Farms Road Entrance

Saturday, April 12

Heather will start this program with a short film on vernal pools and the certification program in Massachusetts, and then we will meet at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area for a walk to our vernal pools. Attend one or both segments. Vernal pools are temporary wetlands that provide critical habitat for invertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians, such as spotted salamanders, wood frogs, fairy shrimp and spring peepers (peepers are best known for their sharp peeping calls heard in chorus from wetlands in early spring). These habitats and their upland forests are essential for the survival of many of these species.

Walks and Talks - Spring and Summer 2008 (continued)

Ecosystem Hike

Sunday, April 13

John Body, Mike Wojtech, Timothy Brown

1 p.m. at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, North Farms Road Entrance

John, Mike and Timothy will welcome the spring with a hike to explore some of the habitats at the FLCA. We will spend about two hours exploring forest ecosystems, vernal pools, lake, and old orchard systems. If time allows, we will walk out to Cooke's Pasture to see a restored and managed shrub land, an important focus of the Conservation Area management plan. It's all about habitat. This event is co-sponsored by Valley Land Fund (VLF) and the Northampton Wildlife Committee.

Spring Warblers and Plants

Saturday, May 17

Charles Quinlin

7:30 a.m. at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Moose Lodge Entrance, at the top of Cooke Avenue

Charles brings 35 years of experience to our spring bird walk that will include a more extensive examination of habitats and plants at FLCA. He will spend about two hours discussing rare and endangered plants, land acquisition and preservation, and the indispensable need for a variety of habitats for species survival. Bring binoculars.

Charles received the New England Wild Flower Society Achievement Award for Conservation in Berkshire County and is our first Berkshire County Hoffman Bird Club leader.

Wildflowers

Sunday, May 25

Janet Bissell, Plant Conservation Leader, New England Wildflower Society (NEWFS)

1 p.m. at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, Moose Lodge Entrance, at the top of Cooke Avenue

Janet will be looking for spring ephemeral wildflowers and other flora. She will discuss the natural history, folk lore and identification of these wonderful forest plants. She will identify invasive species, as well as discuss the impact they have on biodiversity. She will also talk about some of the native plants we can use in our gardens. Bring a field guide and hand lens if available. This walk should take about two hours.

Janet is an avid amateur botanist and plant conservation volunteer who leads walks for Massachusetts Audubon, NEWFS, and the Smith College Botanic Garden.

This and That and Beaver Habitat (evening program)

Friday, July 11

Gini Traub, Environmental Education Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

7 p.m. at Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, North Farms Road Entrance

Observe the changing sights and sounds that early evening brings as we spend a couple of hours walking through the forest to beaver habitat and lodges on Fitzgerald Lake. You are likely to see beaver, but binoculars are always helpful. Consider bringing a flashlight. Gini will demonstrate some of the activities that support the Massachusetts Forest and Parks "Beaver Ecology" student program. Appropriate for children accompanied by an adult, and adults. Approximately 1 mile on flat and easy terrain (½ accessible asphalt path). This is also an opportunity to be out and about after dark. Sunset is at 8:27, twilight till about 10:20 p.m., and the moon is in its first quarter.

Thanks again to our 2007 Walk and Talk Leaders!

Heather Ruel

Andrew Magee

Anne Lombard

Shirley Hammersmith

Gini Traub

Janet Bissell

Jay Girard

David McLain

BBC Profile: Molly Hale



Deeply appreciative of the beauty of nature since childhood, Molly Hale joined the board of directors of Broad Brook Coalition (BBC) in 1990. While she grew up near Washington D.C. and Ottawa, Canada, she was a member of Hampshire College's class of 1982 and stayed in the area. As an Environmental Science major she found many opportunities to teach and learn more about the natural history of the Pioneer Valley and grew to love it.

Molly became concerned about the Valley's gradual environmental degradation as more prosperity and development came to the area in the 1980's and 1990's. Planning boards, conservation groups and state agencies were seemingly not paying much attention. So Molly

joined BBC to help where she could. She took on the task of developing a management plan for the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. BBC needed to balance the potentially conflicting goals of protection of biodiversity with promotion of low impact recreation and nature education.

"The experience of working on that plan was a very useful one which helped me write management plans for other clients including private landowners, land trusts and town watershed lands." says Molly. "I also met really wonderful people who have been my friends ever since." The decision to map the Fitzgerald Lake area for plant and wildlife communities and identify threats to their survival before cutting more trails has been crucial to effective stewardship of the land that many of us enjoy today.

Though she left the Board in 1995 when her son was born, Molly still leads "Walk and Talk" events on winter tracking, the life of vernal pools and natural history. She also joins her friends for occasional clean-up days. She says that her most rewarding time on the Board was the opportunity to oversee Jody Larson, an intern from Antioch College who designed an interpretive trail at Fitzgerald Lake. Then of course, there are always those moments when you are dive bombed by a goshawk for coming too close to its nest and seeing a great horned owl up close from the bird blind.

2008 finds Molly living in Florence with her son Charlie and her partner Bick Corsa. She teaches natural history at Greenfield Community College, does project work for the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and works on political issues such as Peak Oil, the Bagshare project and the River Valley Market.

Being in nature for Molly is like "floating in a womb". She feels totally connected to the universe and to herself. What a blessing! Her advice to us all who would like to understand nature better is, "Go out there and just be, SOAK IT UP. Make sure your children have plenty of exposure to nature. Also, take advantage of learning all you can from other nature experts. You'll begin to notice more in nature, see connections, be puzzled, ask questions about the why's and how's, and revere the intricacies and richness of life."

Joan Hastings

2007 "Moose Patrol" Bird and Animal Count

Almost every week Frank Gessing and some of his friends spend a couple of hours at the bird blind in FLCA watching the abundance of bird and animal life from that great viewpoint. They keep track of what they see and here is their report for last year: 101 species of birds; 2 moose; 7 black bear; 2 skunks; 2 raccoons; 1 fisher; 1 bobcat; 2 mink; 4 porcupines; 1 red fox; 2 coyotes; 2 muskrats; 3 cottontail rabbits; 5 white-tailed deer; 2 flying squirrels, and many red and gray squirrels. In a few weeks we'll be refurbishing the kiosk on North Farms Road. Frank has generously donated many wonderful pictures of wildlife in FLCA that will be displayed there.

Jim Reis

From the President's Desk

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is now up and running, delivering funds to benefit the citizens of Northampton. The very first project approved by the Northampton Community Preservation Committee (CPC) involved an important land preservation effort, the purchase of about 100 acres of land to be added to the Mineral Hills Conservation area near Turkey Hill Road.

The nine-member CPC evaluates projects from four categories: land preservation, affordable housing, historic preservation, and recreational fields. Applicants prepare project summaries and meet with the CPC. To receive funding, projects must first be approved by the CPC and then by City Council.

It is likely that Broad Brook Coalition will apply for CPA funds when we have a project worthy of consideration. BBC has helped to fund much of the land added to Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, thanks to the generosity of our donors. Many of these parcels have had limited development potential, so the cost has not been as great as parcels with road frontage. We are planning for the possibility that larger, more expensive, properties may be available in future years. For a major project, our funding sources might include a local fund-raising campaign involving individuals and businesses, grants from land trusts and land preservation groups, and the Northampton CPC. It is fascinating to consider that BBC might someday find a project compatible with two of our missions: protecting land and supporting affordable housing.

In a letter to the CPC and in public comments, BBC supported preservation of the Turkey Hill-Mineral Hills project. The land connects two large existing parcels of the Mineral Hills Conservation Area, forming a contiguous area of about 325 existing acres. This allows for improved wildlife and plant habitat, creates interesting trail possibilities, and furthers the goal of establishing viable wildlife corridors through Northampton's western and northern borders – from Mt. Tom and Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary through Mineral Hills and Robert's Hill and eventually to the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area and on to protected areas in Hatfield, Whately, Williamsburg, and Conway.

Final preservation of the Mineral Hills parcel will depend on a fund-raising campaign. Northampton received a State grant of \$470,000, and City Council approved the CPC recommendation to appropriate \$350,000 of CPA funds. Wayne Feiden, Northampton's City Planner anticipates that an additional \$75,000 will be needed. If you would like to help preserve this important parcel, tax deductible contributions can be made payable to the City of Northampton and sent to Wayne Feiden, City Planner, 210 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060. Mark on the memo line "Kohl parcel".

Robert Bissell

Animal Tracking with Molly Hale - January 2008

A week before the Animal Tracking Walk and Talk, temperatures had been up and down, and there had repeated melting and refreezing with very little new snow cover. This can make tracking very difficult. But fear not! With expert tracking guide Molly Hale and abundant wildlife in FLCA, the forty plus people of all ages who participated were treated to some excellent tracking. Less than 25 yards from the parking lot down the trail to the lake, Molly located some very clear bobcat tracks which we followed into the woods. The kids in particular were very excited, and we all learned some of the bobcat track's unique features – round, 4 toes, no claws, stride length, etc. After following this trail for 25 yards we then came upon two other different tracks-- coyote and raccoon – and followed these trails and others for the next two hours.

We are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable naturalist who could answer question after question, and help improve our observation skills to pick out various clues, especially when the track shape wasn't clear. Thank you, Molly!

Jim Reis

Nitrate Pollution in the Broad Brook Watershed

When we resumed regular water quality testing at the FLCA a little over a year ago, we discovered an unusually high level of nitrate (NO_3^-) in the Broad Brook, just east of the bridge over North Farms Road, and somewhat lesser amounts in a small stream that enters the lake at the canoe launch. Subsequent sampling indicated elevated nitrate concentrations in the Broad Brook to the west of North Farms Road as well. High nitrate levels can lead to eutrophication, a process in which the nitrates stimulate plant and algal growth, leading to a proliferation of oxidative bacteria which degrade the excess organic material and, ultimately, to a drop in the concentration of oxygen needed to sustain fish and aquatic invertebrates. Our measurements indicated nitrate concentrations of 1.5-4 parts per million (mg/L) in the Broad Brook, depending on the season. This is a red flag given that the desirable level for healthy fresh-water aquatic life is less than 0.1 parts per million. We have discussed the nitrate problem with Doug McDonald, Northampton's storm drain specialist, who suggested that the most likely sources of elevated nitrates are fertilizer runoff, leaky septic systems, or a combination of the two. In an effort to reduce the release of nitrates into the Broad Brook, McDonald, board member Andrew Grimaldi, and a crew of middle schoolers from the Cloverdale neighborhood will tag the storm drains later this spring with a cautionary label advising that the drains empty into Fitzgerald Lake. We will also request landowners in the Broad Brook drainage basin to limit their fertilizer usage and have their septic systems checked on a regular basis. We will also begin systematic water sampling along the Broad Brook upstream from North Farms Road in the hope that we can identify the site or sites of nitrate influx. *Bob Zimmermann*

If You See Any Water Chestnut Plants

Water chestnut removal was once again the focus of our FLCA work day in 2007. Approximately 110 hours were devoted to this effort on four different days. We believe almost all water chestnut was removed. Since the work days, two more water chestnut plants have been discovered. It is very important that BBC be notified if more plants are seen in the lake. Monitoring and removal are a long term commitment as seeds will continue to produce plants for a number of years. Please call 584-4176 with this information.

Thanks again to Heather Ruel, Beth Goettel, Robert Zimmermann, Keith Davis, Frank Heston, Andrew Grimaldi, Peter Rowe, Jim Reis, Stan-the-Fixit-Man Pollack, Lianna Hart, Sam Parsons, Michaela Twarog, Chris Osopowicz, Ilene Goldstein, Dave Hershops, Bill Williams, Downey Meyer, Brian Adams, Lola Reid, Bruce Hart, Pat Mahoney, and Helen.

Looking for a way to get involved? We have volunteer opportunities!

Clerical Assistant for Member/Donor Acknowledgments: Assist the BBC Treasurer by sending thank you cards to new and renewing members and donors. An easy job that you can do at home. Busiest in October-November. E-mail is helpful but not essential. Contact Alan Marvelli (amarvelli@smith.edu, 586-3756).

Volunteer Coordinator: Involves periodically calling members of BBC who have expressed an interest in volunteering for trail days, invasive species removal days or other kinds of work days. Contact Lou Peugh (lpeugh@verizon.net, 584-3122).

Cot Shelter Coordinator: Coordinate BBC Cot Shelter dinner team monthly during the winter. Attend orientation for team leaders, find volunteers from existing list for each month, and assign cooking duties. Help volunteers serve meal and chat with guests. About 3 hours per month at the shelter plus prep time at home. Contact Lou Peugh (lpeugh@verizon.net, 584-3122).

Habitat for Humanity Volunteer: BBC has not had its own Habitat building team recently, but you can get in touch with Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity directly to volunteer. Their web site (<http://www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org/>) has more information on what work site volunteers (and others) do. Call 413-586-5430 or e-mail volunteer@pioneervalleyhabitat.org.

Newsletter Co-editor and Writers: Help collect, write, and edit articles and/or produce the BBC newsletter published twice a year. Contact Lou Peugh (lpeugh@verizon.net, 584-3122).

Other Volunteers Needed: Monitor and remove invasive plants, monitor and weed native plantings, resite kestrel house, advertise events, create and display signs. Contact Bruce Hart (bhart2000@aol.com, 584-4176).

Broad Brook Coalition Events Calendar – Spring and Summer 2008

- April 12, Saturday** **Walk and Talk:** “Vernal Pools” with Heather Ruel
10 am at Forbes Library
11:30 am at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
- April 13, Sunday** **Walk and Talk:** “Ecosystem Hike” with John Body, Mike Wojtech, Timothy Brown
1 pm at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
- May 3, Saturday** **Work Day:** Shrubland Habitat and Native Plants
8:45 am at Moose Lodge Entrance to FLCA or 9 am at Fitzgerald Lake Dam
- May 17, Saturday** **Walk and Talk:** “Spring Warblers and Plants” with Charles Quinlin
7:30 am at Moose Lodge Entrance to FLCA
- May 25, Sunday** **Walk and Talk:** “Wildflowers” with Janet Bissell
1 pm at at Moose Lodge Entrance to FLCA
- June 14, Saturday** **Work Day:** Removal of Exotic Buckthorn from Cooke’s Pasture
8:45 am at Moose Lodge Entrance to FLCA or 9 am at Fitzgerald Lake Dam
- July 11, Friday** **Walk and Talk:** "This and That and Beaver Habitat" evening program with Gini Traub
7 pm at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
- July 19, Saturday** **Work Day:** Water Chestnut Removal on Fitzgerald Lake
9 am at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
- August 9, Saturday** **Work Day:** Water Chestnut Removal on Fitzgerald Lake
1pm at North Farms Road Entrance to FLCA
-

Directions to North Farms Rd. Entrance to Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area

From the center of Florence (Route 9) traveling west, turn right onto North Maple Street at the traffic light. Proceed north 1.1 miles (North Maple Street will turn into North Farms Rd.) The FLCA parking lot and entrance kiosk will be on your right.

Directions to Moose Lodge Entrance to Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area 196 Cooke Avenue, Northampton

From Routes 5 and 10 (King Street) traveling north, turn left onto Bridge Road at a set of traffic lights. At the next set of lights, take a right onto Cooke Avenue. Take Cooke Avenue to its end and you will be in the Moose Lodge parking area. Please park on the right as this is actually a private lot generously shared with Northampton citizens by the Moose Lodge.

PLEASE JOIN US!

If you're not already a member, please complete this form and return it with \$25.00 to
BROAD BROOK COALITION, P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062
(All contributions to Broad Brook Coalition are **tax deductible**.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Additional contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund: \$ _____

Please do not include my name in any listing of contributors to Broad Brook Coalition. _____

Broad Brook Coalition Needs Your Help, Too!

We appreciate your membership dues, but we can also use your volunteer time. Members and friends are needed to help carry out our goals. Please consider one (or more) of the following volunteer opportunities:

Trail maintenance and repair

Invasive species removal

Clerical help/Mailings

Computer help

Volunteer at Interfaith Cot Shelter

Writer/reporter for newsletter

Newsletter editor

Fundraising campaigns

Management Committee (manages conservation area)

Land Preservation/Acquisition Committee

BBC Board of Directors

Educational/recreational program planning or leadership,
(a.k.a. Walks and Talks)

Monitor housing issues in the City

BROAD BROOK COALITION BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2006-2007)

Robert Bissell, President

Robert A. Zimmermann, Vice-President

Norma Roche, Secretary

Alan Marvelli, Treasurer

Andrew Grimaldi

Bruce Hart

Frank Olbris

Lou Peugh

James Reis



Broad Brook Coalition is on the web at www.broadbrookcoalition.org.

To receive occasional email alerts regarding BBC programs and local conservation issues, go to www.broadbrookcoalition.org and look for “**Join the Listserv**” under the “**Events**” tab at the top of the page.



P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062

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Save The Date! Sunday, September 14th
Join us in celebrating Broad Brook Coalition's 20th Anniversary
Walks and Talks at Fitzgerald Lake throughout the day
Reception in the afternoon at the Florence Civic Center

